DC
BY CONWAY, ANDRU, & GARCIA LOPEZ
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ATARI FORCE
FACE TO FACE WITH THE DARK DESTROYER
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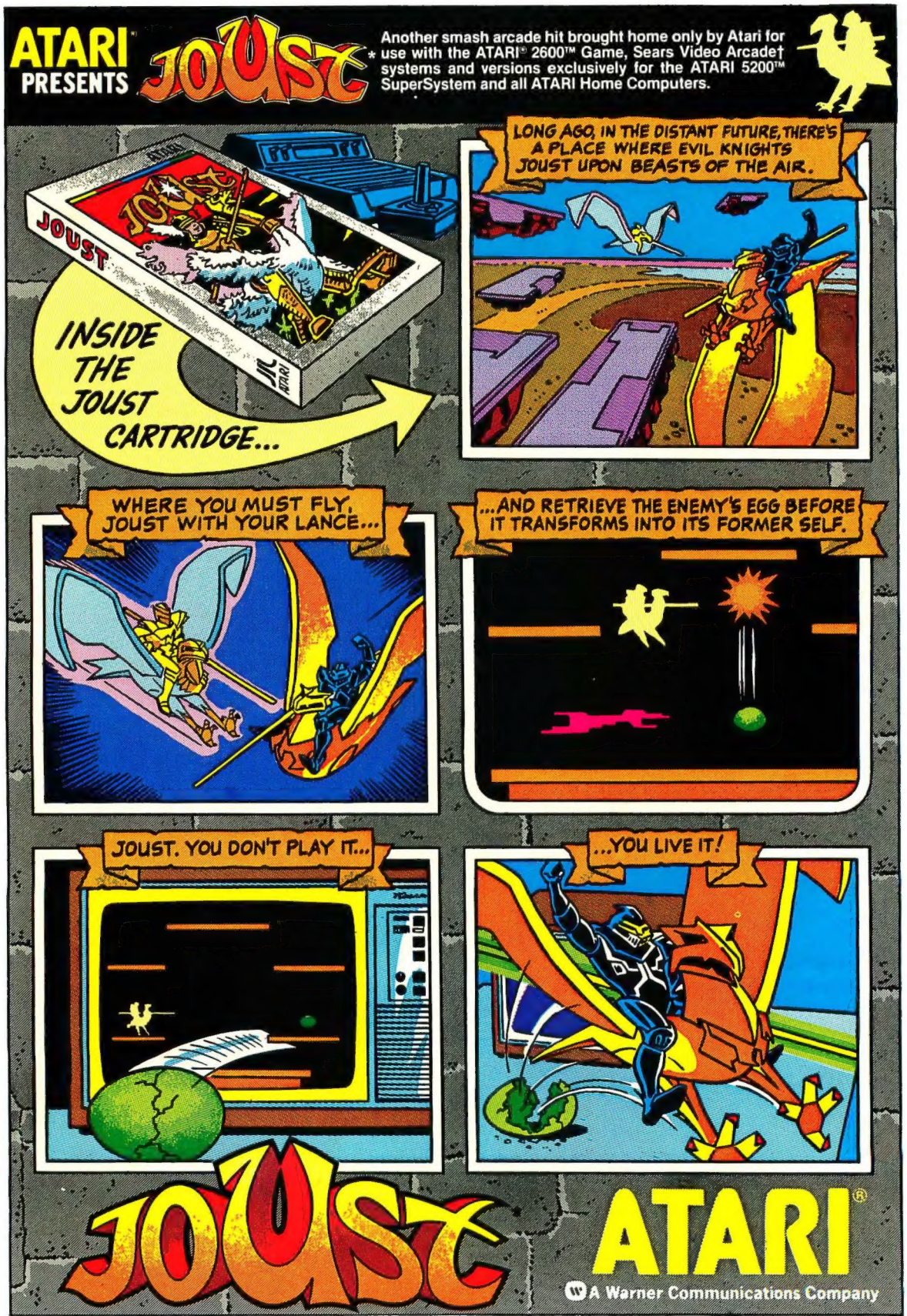

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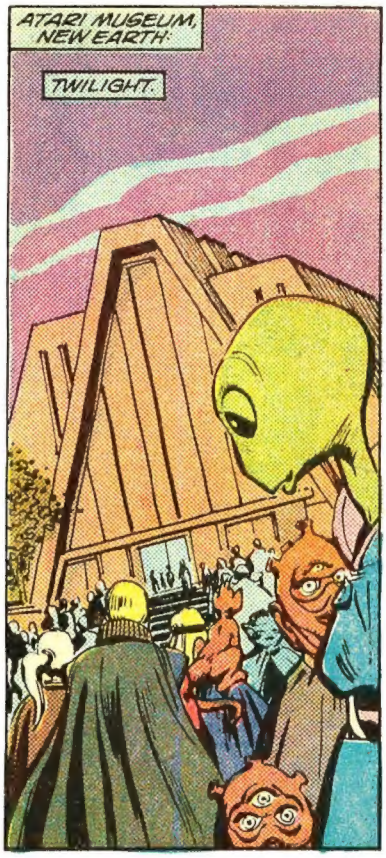

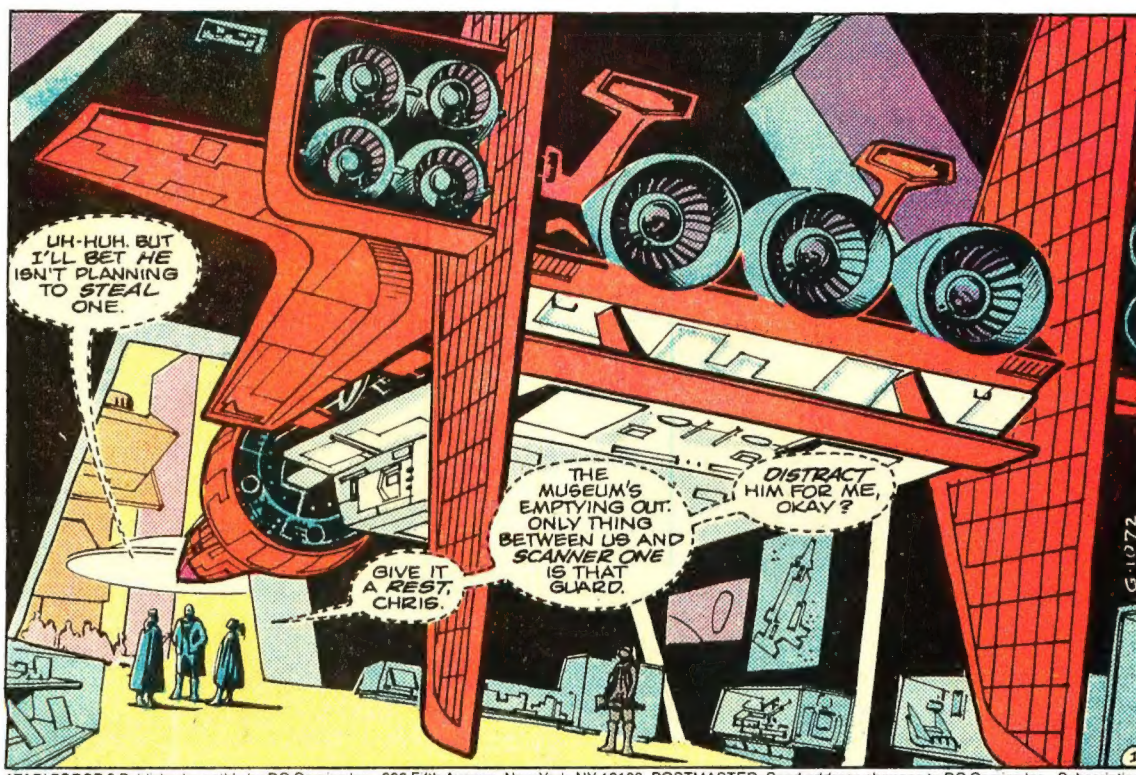

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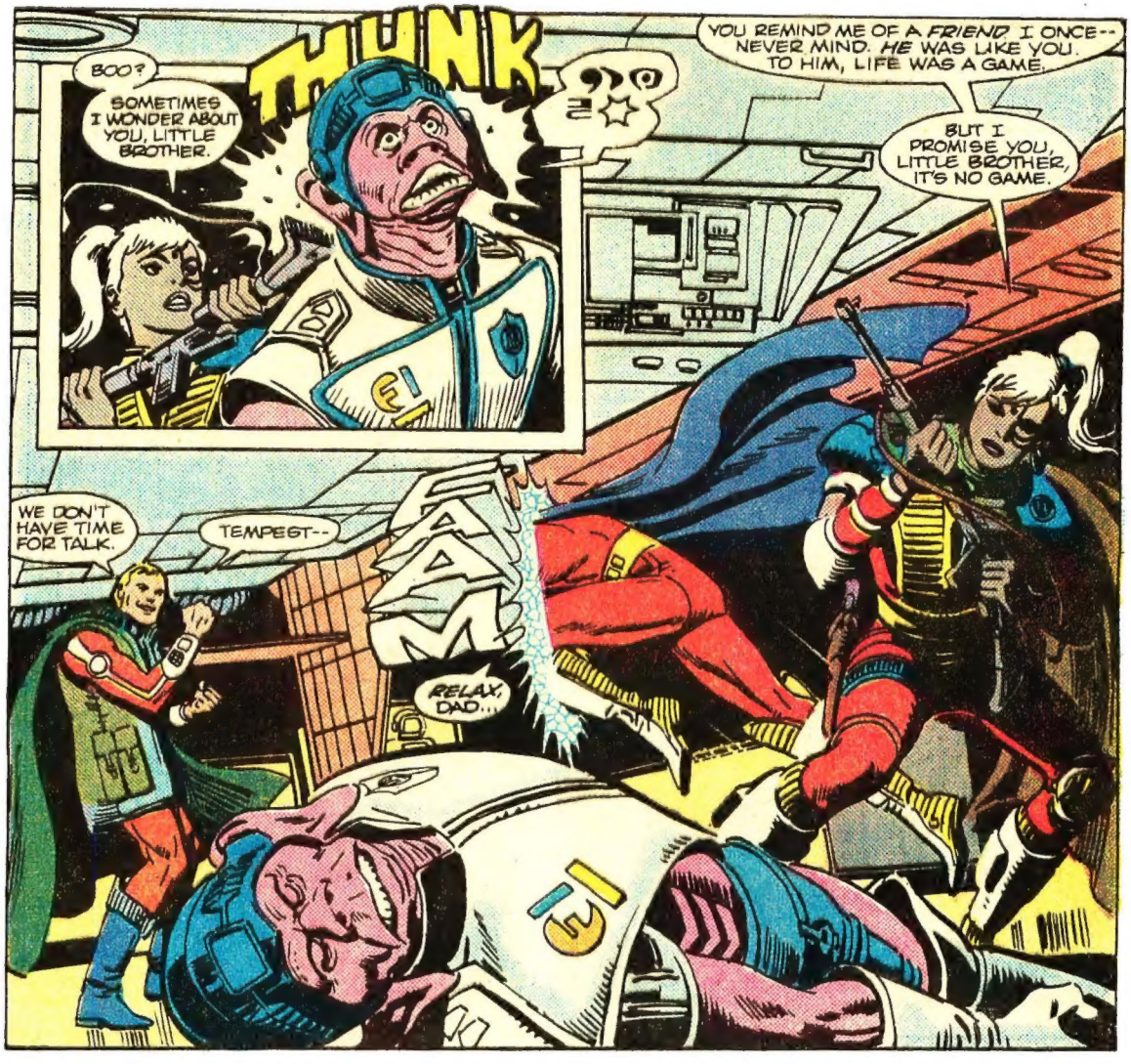
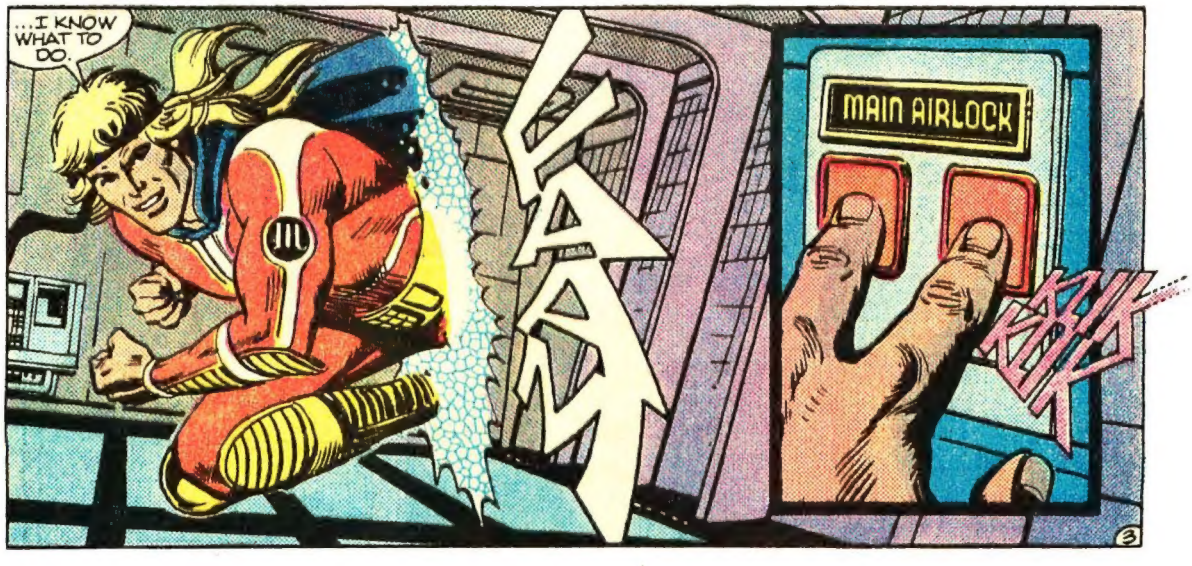
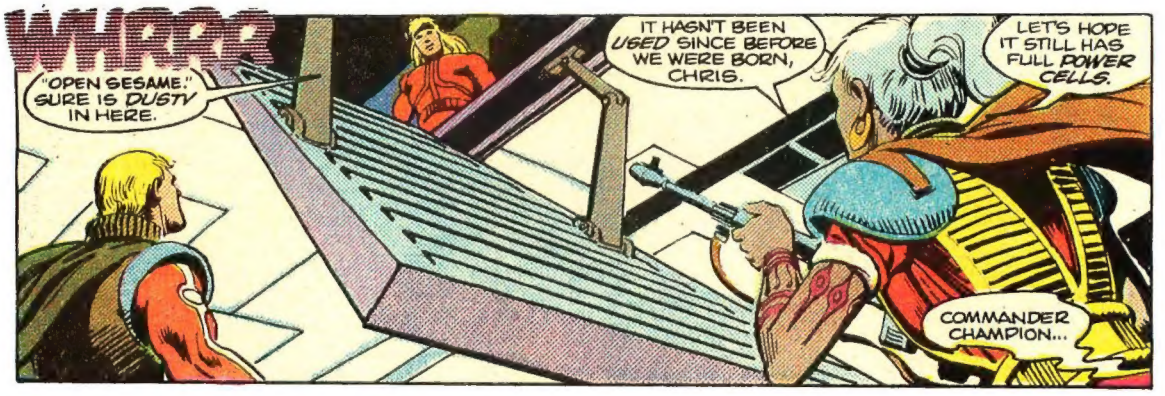
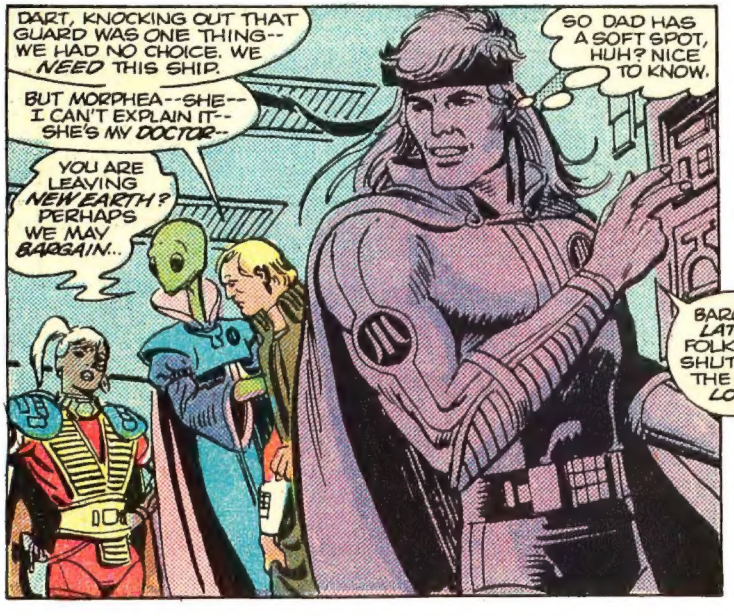
HIS NAME IS CHRIS CHAMPION, BUT TO THE ATARI SCIENTISTS LIKE PROFESSOR LUCIA CAITLIN VENTURE WHO HAVE STUDIED HIS STRANGE PHASE-POWER, HE IS TEMPEST.
AT WILL, HE CAN PHASE THROUGH THE DIMENSIONS OF THE MULTIVERSE -- JUMPING FROM ONE PART OF REALITY TO ANOTHER.
TONIGHT, HE WILL JOIN FIVE OTHER MISFITS TO FORM--
ATARI FORCE
CREATED BY GERRY CONWAY, ROY THOMAS AND JOSÉ GARCÍA LOPEZ
BOO
DARK DAWN
BY
GERRY CONWAY * ROSS ANDRU
JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA LOPEZ
ABLY ASSISTED BY
bob lappan, LETTERER
TOM ZIUKO, COLORIST
ANDY HELFER, EDITOR
WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO JOE ORLANDO
2


THUNK
BOO?
SOMETIMES I WONDER ABOUT YOU, LITTLE BROTHER.
YOU REMIND ME OF A *FRIEND* I ONCE-- NEVER MIND. *HE* WAS LIKE YOU. TO HIM, LIFE WAS A GAME.
BUT I PROMISE YOU, LITTLE BROTHER, IT'S NO GAME.
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR TALK.
TEMPEST--
KAM
RELAX, DAD...


...I KNOW WHAT TO DO.
KAAA
MAIN AIRLOCK
KLK KLK





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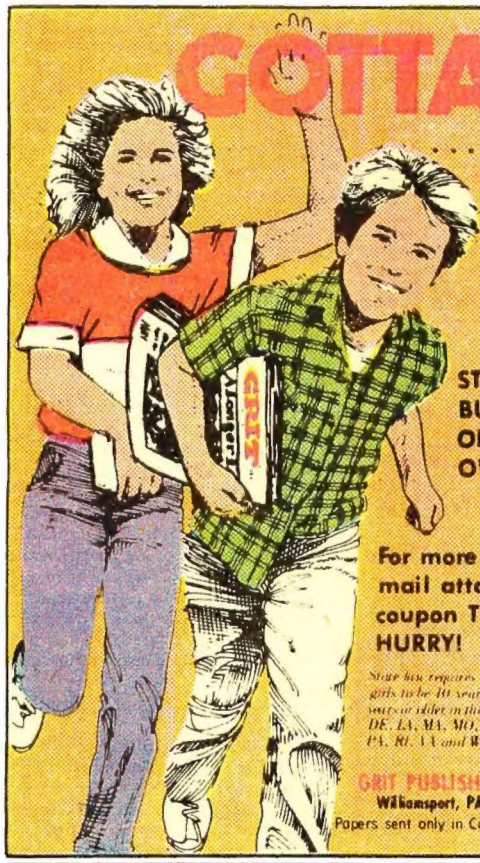

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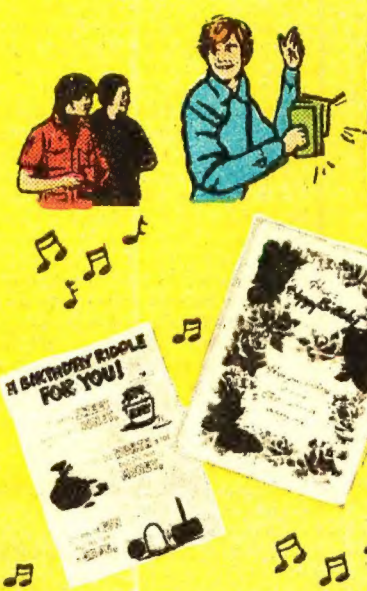

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MEANWHILE...

Hi! My name is Mindy Newell. Okay, I know my moniker is unfamiliar to you, right now. Pretty soon, however, it will be gracing the pages of NEW TALENT SHOWCASE. There's been a lot of publicity about this project, but no one has thought to ask any of us ("us" being the aforementioned NEW TALENT) of our experiences. I thought it might be informative and encouraging for other aspiring comic professionals to learn a bit about the inner workings and machinations of being published.

I asked Dick, and he gave me permission to tell you about the phone booth hidden within the confines of 666 Fifth Avenue into which an ordinary, mild-mannered woman can enter and emerge seconds later as..... SUPERWRITER!!!!!!!

Well, so that's not exactly what happens. Sometimes my imagination gets a little carried away. I **am** a writer, after all. But I'm not mild-mannered, and I don't wear glasses, either.

How **does** it happen? I can only tell you of my own experience, and of the things I have been taught.

About a year ago, a note was made of the hunt for new faces at DC right on this page. I had written some articles for magazines, starting a nice collection of reject slips. There were also a pile of stories I had written, mostly for myself, sitting and collecting dust in one of my desk drawers. (What did I do for a living? I was a registered nurse.) But I had never written for any fanzines, nor had considered comics as a viable alternative for showing off any talent I might possess.

But I was at a crossroads in my life. Nursing had paled on me, even though the money was good...and I had vowed never to become the gruff, bitter type, feeling trapped in a job that calls for so much. A nurse means **caring**. I had what has been termed as "post-divorce syndrome": throwing myself into a variety of activities.

So it was a combination of these factors, plus curiosity, that made me sit down, compile a character and storyline, and send it off to Sal Amendola, he being the NEW TALENT COORDINATOR. Poor guy. His desk has never looked the same. Among the hundreds of manila envelopes he plowed through was mine.

First there was some preliminary correspondence. Just enough to get my hopes up. Of course, I knew better than to count my chickens before they hatched, but who cared? There was a **chance!**

About six weeks later, I found myself sitting in Karen Berger's office. (She being the editor of the SHOWCASE book). With typical New Yorker aplomb, I was very matter-of-fact as we sat and discussed a bit of my personal history, writing experience, story-line and plot possibilities. Right, Karen? I even managed to shake Len Wein's hand with just the right amount of nonchalance when he interrupted our discussion, and Karen introduced me. Uh, Karen, don't look at me like that. Well, never mind her, folks. I really was the height of Big Apple sophistication.

Then I was sent home with stacks of material on comic writing. Actually, I floated home. Why, I even got stuck in the Holland Tunnel for an hour and a half, and couldn't care less. If you've never gotten stuck in the Holland Tunnel.... How many of you have ever read Dante's Inferno? **That's** the idea. But I actually **welcomed** the traffic. Gave me a chance to think about what had transpired earlier.

Once I got home, I laid everything out in front of me. This included guidelines, old plot synopses and scripts, a couple of old House of Mystery's, and notes I had taken during my discussion with Karen. I didn't get to work right away.

But the next day, I tackled my typewriter with great fervor. There are many ways of writing a comic, but I was doing a **full script**. This entails art directions, panel breakdowns, sound effects, captions, and dialogue. Before one can graduate to other forms, a writer must learn to visualize the spread of the page. This includes understanding panel placement, the amount of action that can be contained in a single panel, caption and balloon placement, and the amount of words per panel.

The comic book is a visual medium. For the writer, this means learning to have an artist's eye. A course in journalism is helpful, too, since the words themselves must be kept to a minimum. Yet, the story must be well-paced and cohesive, neither artwork nor printed word dominating. They must work **together**.

This is all part of the basics. Many writers prefer to always work with a full script, feeling that it helps them in planning and seeing the story in their mind's eye. I find myself in that fraternity. I don't know if I'll ever "graduate" to descriptive page breakdowns. (Or maybe I'm just starting to feel comfortable with what I already know...we'll **see**.)

It took a while, but I finally finished my first script. It took numero visits to Karen, lots of re-writes, learning, and unlearning. But when I first saw the pencils of JENESIS done by Mark Beachum, it was something hard to describe. Sort of akin to the feeling I had when I gave birth to my daughter. Creativity personified. Amazing!

Since then, I've written three more stories. Has it come easier with each passing one? Yes and no. I understand the mechanics better. My dialogue is becoming more polished, my pacing more professional. **But,** I still make mistakes. And that's the hard part, at least for me. I find myself pushing harder all the time, getting angry for **not** being SUPERWRITER. I expect more of myself with each visit to Karen. Of course, she does, too. Sometimes, the harshest criticism can come from inside.

Are there common factors with us? Talent? Sure, I suppose. Still, there are other things, some more important. Determination to succeed. Maturity to handle criticism. Ability to fall on your face, get up, dust yourself off, and keep going. Knowing that others know more than you do. Accepting that. **Wanting to learn.** Timing. Luck. Discipline.

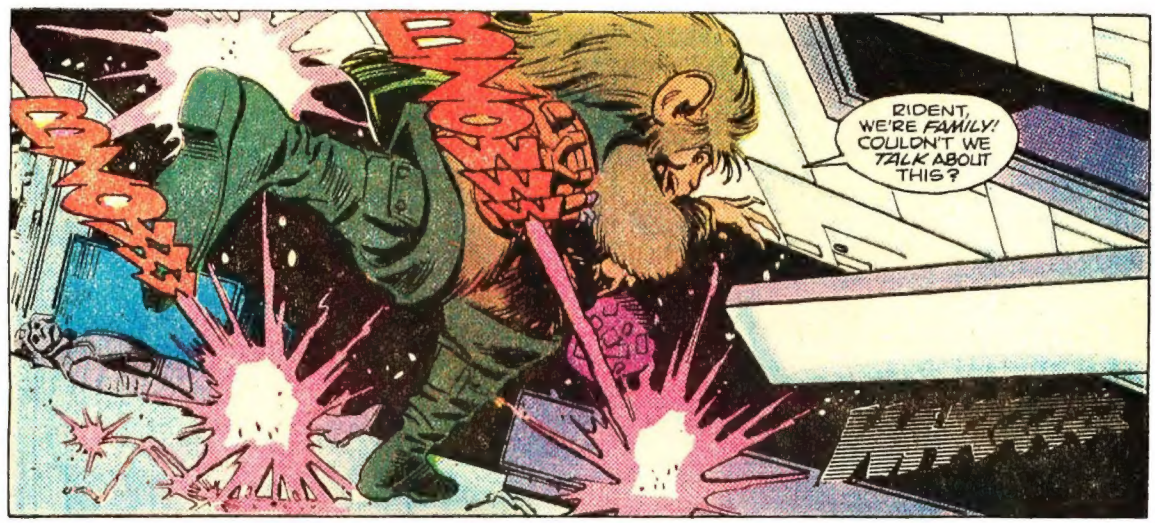
Finally, kudos must go to Dick Giordano, Sal Amendola, and Karen Berger. To Dick, for being the guiding light behind the drive to directly introduce and instill fresh faces into the industry. To Sal, for having the patience to listen as we have all cried on his shoulders at one time or another. And to Karen, for having the guts to take on a bunch of amateurs, and trying to turn us into pros.

Do I have any personal tips? Well, I shouldn't, but...sift through your record stack. Take out any John Williams score. Put on your headphones. Sit down in front of your typewriter. And **write!**

Excuse me. Have to go put the other side of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK on.

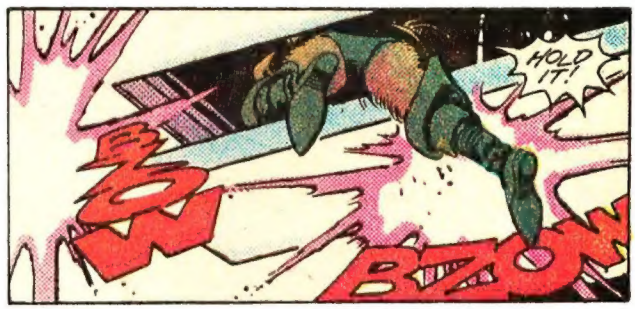
Thanks, Dick!

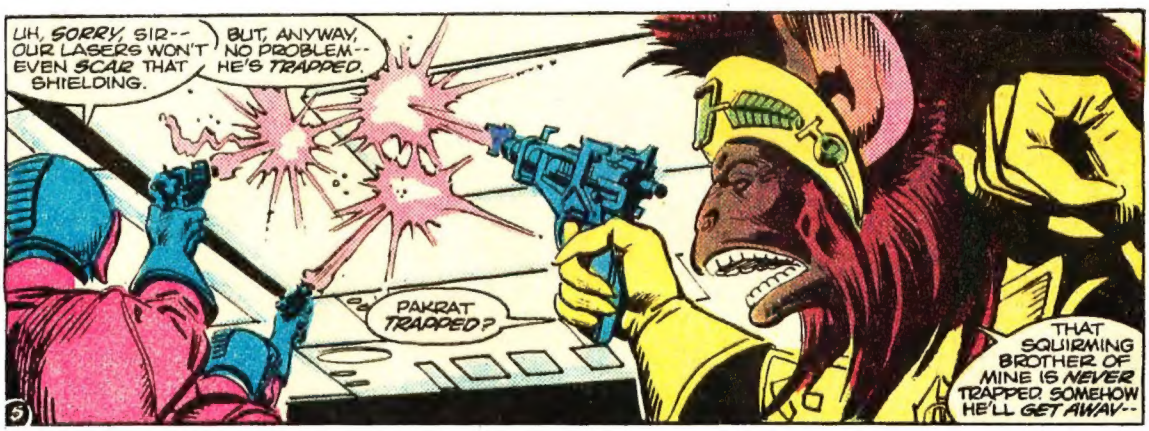
Mindy

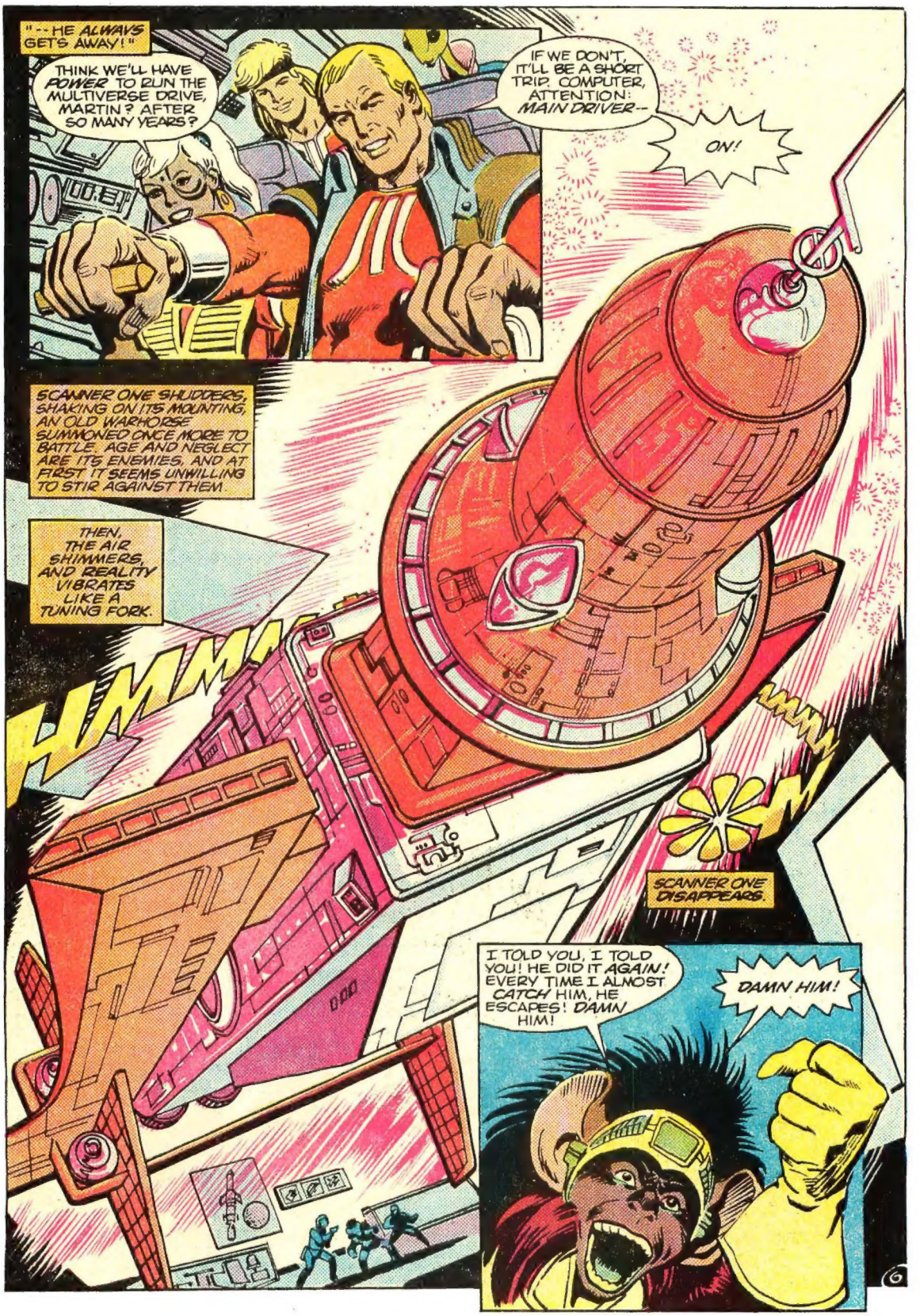

BZZOW
RIDENT, WE'RE FAMILY! COULDN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

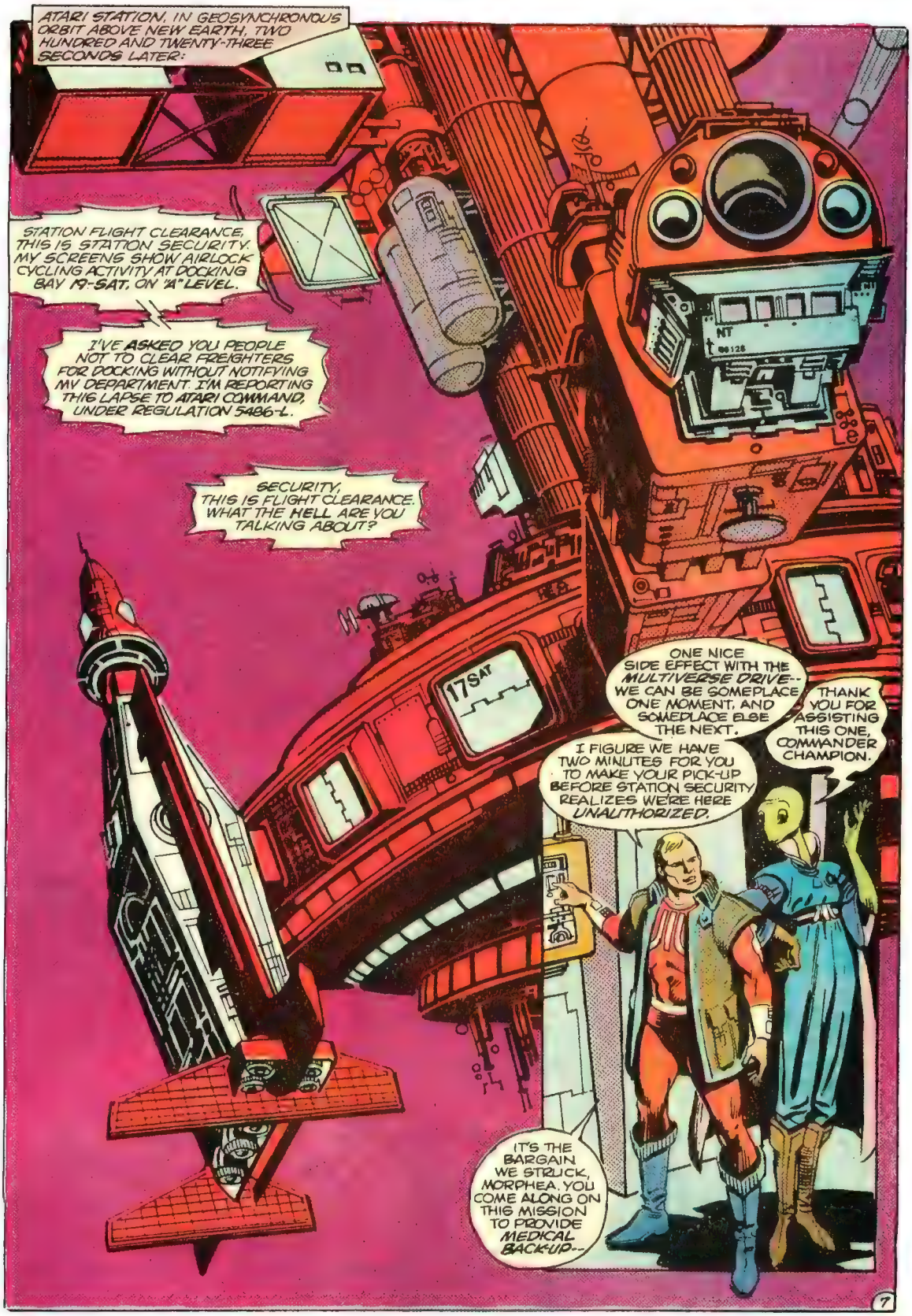
TALK ABOUT WHAT? YOU'RE A THIEF, PAKRAT!
AND I'VE CAUGHT YOU BLUSHING WITH A PACK FULL OF STOLEN ARTIFACTS!
GUARDS, BURN HIM DOWN!

BZZOW
BZZOW
HOLD THE GATE!


HOLD IT!
BZZOW
BZZOW


UH, SORRY, SIR-- OUR LASERS WON'T EVEN SCAR THAT SHIELDING.
BUT, ANYWAY, NO PROBLEM-- HE'S TRAPPED.
PAKRAT TRAPPED?
THAT SQUIRMING BROTHER OF MINE IS NEVER TRAPPED. SOMEHOW HE'LL GET AWAY--


"--HE ALWAYS GET'S AWAY!"
THINK WE'LL HAVE POWER TO RUN THE MULTIVERSE DRIVE, MARTIN? AFTER SO MANY YEARS?
IF WE DON'T, IT'LL BE A SHORT TRIP. COMPUTER, ATTENTION: MAIN DRIVER--
ON!
SCANNER ONE SHUDDERS, SHAKING ON ITS MOUNTING, AN OLD WARHORSE SUMMONED ONCE MORE TO BATTLE. AGE AND NEGLECT ARE ITS ENEMIES, AND AT FIRST IT SEEMS UNWILLING TO STIR AGAINST THEM.
THEN, THE AIR SHIMMERS, AND REALITY VIBRATES LIKE A TUNING FORK.
HMMMM
SCANNER ONE DISAPPEARS.
I TOLD YOU, I TOLD YOU! HE DID IT AGAIN! EVERY TIME I ALMOST CATCH HIM, HE ESCAPES! DAMN HIM!
DAMN HIM!
6


ATARI STATION, IN GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT ABOVE NEW EARTH, TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE SECONDS LATER:
STATION FLIGHT CLEARANCE, THIS IS STATION SECURITY. MY SCREENS SHOW AIRLOCK CYCLING ACTIVITY AT DOCKING BAY 17-SAT, ON "A" LEVEL.
I'VE ASKED YOU PEOPLE NOT TO CLEAR FREIGHTERS FOR DOCKING WITHOUT NOTIFYING MY DEPARTMENT. I'M REPORTING THIS LAPSE TO ATARI COMMAND, UNDER REGULATION 5486-L.
SECURITY, THIS IS FLIGHT CLEARANCE. WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
17SAT
ONE NICE SIDE EFFECT WITH THE MULTIVERSE DRIVE-- WE CAN BE SOMEPLACE ONE MOMENT, AND SOMEPLACE ELSE THE NEXT.
THANK YOU FOR ASSISTING THIS ONE, COMMANDER CHAMPION.
I FIGURE WE HAVE TWO MINUTES FOR YOU TO MAKE YOUR PICK-UP BEFORE STATION SECURITY REALIZES WE'RE HERE UNAUTHORIZED.
IT'S THE BARGAIN WE STRUCK, MORPHEA. YOU COME ALONG ON THIS MISSION TO PROVIDE MEDICAL BACK-UP--

"--AND AFTER WE'RE FINISHED, WE HELP YOU GET THAT OVERGROWN *BABY* OUT THERE BACK TO HIS PARENTS ON THE PLANET *EGG*, PROVIDED HE DOESN'T EAT US OUT OF OUR *RATION STORE* FIRST."

BABE! COME TO THIS ONE, QUICKLY!

THIS ONE IS TAKING YOU HOME!

MOR-PHA?

BANG

I WAN' STAY WIT' *MOR-PHA*.

WHERE WE GO, MOR-PHA?

THIS ONE ONLY WISHES SHE KNEW, CHILD.

YOU'LL LEARN SOON ENOUGH, DOCTOR.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

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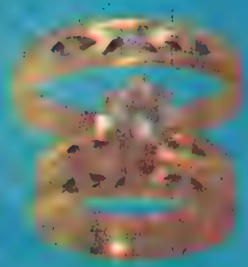

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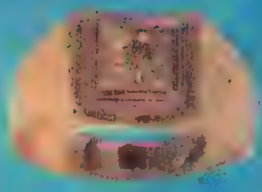

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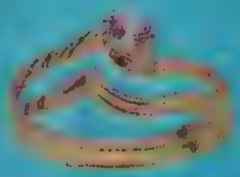

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JUST IN TIME, TOO.
CHECK THOSE EXTERIOR SCREENS--WE'VE GOT COMPANY COMING.
DART, ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THING?
MARTIN'S YOUR FATHER, CHRIS. YOU TELL ME. THIS "MISSION" WAS HIS IDEA.
I'M JUST AN OUT-OF-WORK MERCENARY WITH LOTS OF FREE TIME ON HER HANDS.
AND THIS SURE BEATS HELL OUT OF EARLY RETIREMENT.
UNIDENTIFIED SHIP. THIS IS ATARI STATION SECURITY. WE DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE--IMMEDIATE--UH.
WATCH COMMANDER, WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM HERE...

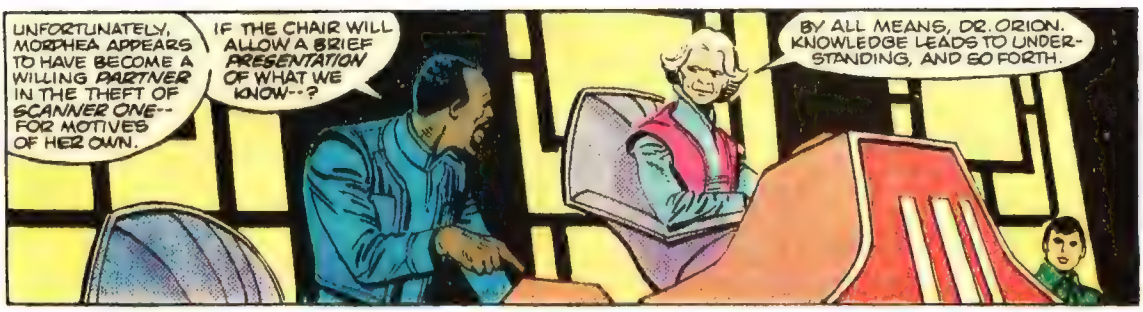
...IT VANISHED? HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? WHY WEREN'T ITS POWER CELLS DRAINED DECADES AGO?
AN OVERSIGHT, MA'AM. WE SUSPECT COMMANDER CHAMPION WAS RESPONSIBLE.
APPARENTLY, YOUR FRIEND CHAMPION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A GREAT MANY "OVERSIGHTS," DR. ORION.
YOU, THERE-- CUSTOMS OFFICER. WHAT PART HAVE YOU TO PLAY IN ALL THIS?
I TRACED THE THIEF TUKLA OLY, ALIAS PAKRAT, HERE TO NEW EARTH. MOMENTS BEFORE SCANNER ONE VANISHED FROM THE ATARI MUSEUM, PAKRAT SLIPPED ABOARD.

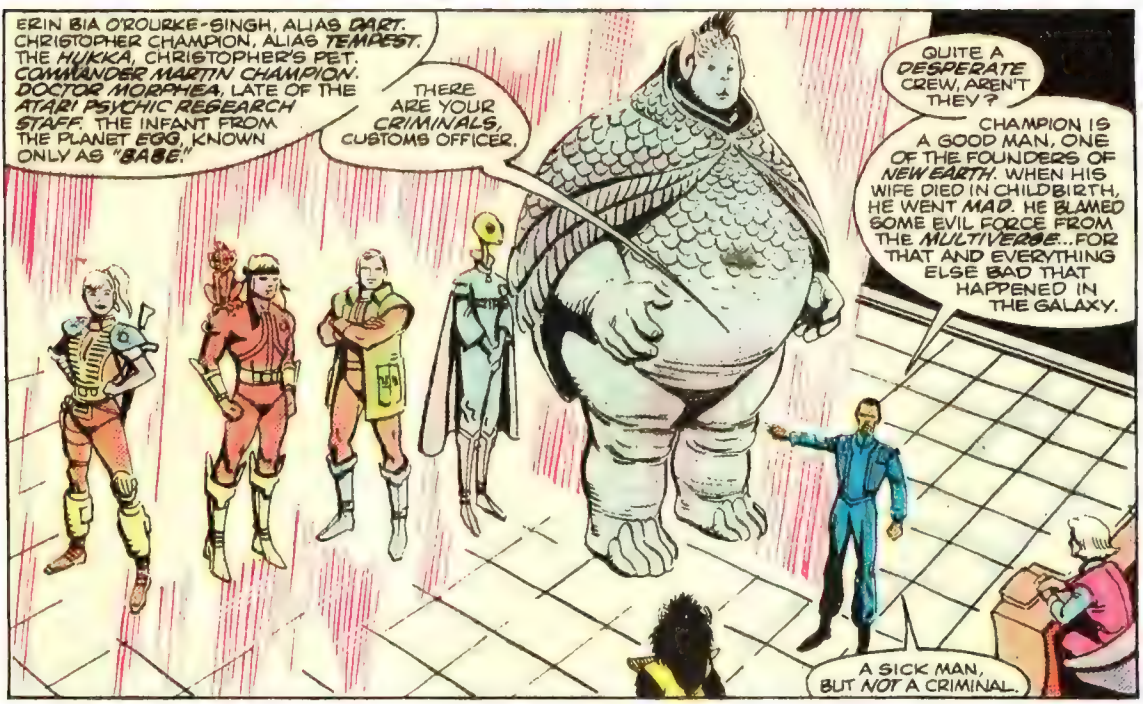
IT IS MY BELIEF THAT HE AND THIS CHAMPION PERSON ARE COHORTS IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

ABSURD.
ADMITTED, MARTIN'S BEHAVIOR IS ERRATIC, BUT CRIMINAL? THAT I CANNOT BELIEVE. WE WERE FRIENDS, MEMBERS OF THE ATARI FORCE. I'D TRUST HIM WITH MY LIFE. I'M CERTAIN HE HAS AN EXPLANATION FOR WHAT HE'S DONE...

YES... BUT WE'RE HARDLY IN A POSITION TO ASK HIM FOR SUCH AN EXPLANATION, ARE WE?

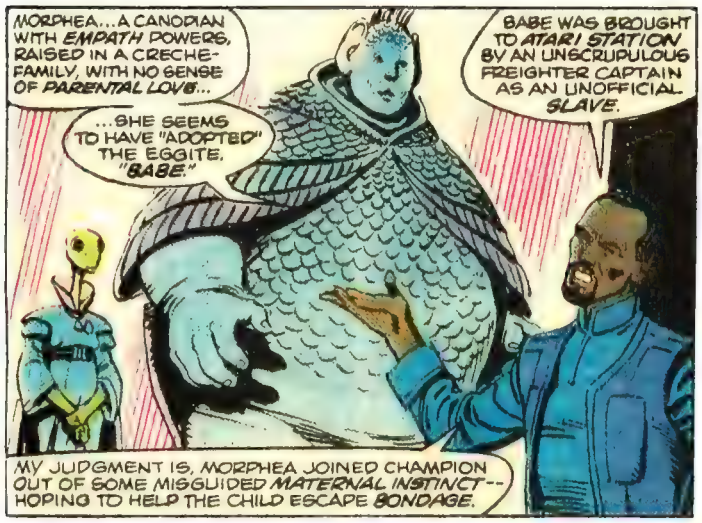
AS I UNDERSTAND IT, MARTIN CHAMPION WAS ON MEDICAL LEAVE FROM THE INSTITUTE--UNDER THE CARE OF A PSYCHIATRIST, A CANOPIAN NAMED MORPHEA.
SHOULDN'T SHE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF CHAMPION'S INTENTIONS?
COULDN'T SHE HAVE WARNED US?


UNFORTUNATELY, MORPHEA APPEARS TO HAVE BECOME A WILLING PARTNER IN THE THEFT OF SCANNER ONE--FOR MOTIVES OF HER OWN.
IF THE CHAIR WILL ALLOW A BRIEF PRESENTATION OF WHAT WE KNOW--?
BY ALL MEANS, DR. ORION. KNOWLEDGE LEADS TO UNDERSTANDING, AND SO FORTH.


ERIN BIA O'ROURKE-SINGH, ALIAS DART. CHRISTOPHER CHAMPION, ALIAS TEMPEST. THE HUKKA, CHRISTOPHER'S PET. COMMANDER MARTIN CHAMPION. DOCTOR MORPHEA, LATE OF THE ATARI PSYCHIC RESEARCH STAFF. THE INFANT FROM THE PLANET EGG, KNOWN ONLY AS "BABE."
THERE ARE YOUR CRIMINALS, CUSTOMS OFFICER.
QUITE A DESPERATE CREW, AREN'T THEY?
CHAMPION IS A GOOD MAN, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF NEW EARTH. WHEN HIS WIFE DIED IN CHILDBIRTH, HE WENT MAD. HE BLAMED SOME EVIL FORCE FROM THE MULTIVERSE...FOR THAT AND EVERYTHING ELSE BAD THAT HAPPENED IN THE GALAXY.
A SICK MAN, BUT NOT A CRIMINAL.

THE WOMAN, DART--DAUGHTER OF CHAMPION'S COLLEAGUES ABOARD SCANNER ONE, DURING THE DAYS OF THE ATARI FORCE, MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS AGO.
A MERCENARY AT LOOSE ENDS. HER LOVER AND PARTNER, A MAN NAMED BLACKJAK, DIED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO.
UNDOUBTEDLY, SHE FELL IN WITH CHAMPION FOR AMUSEMENT.

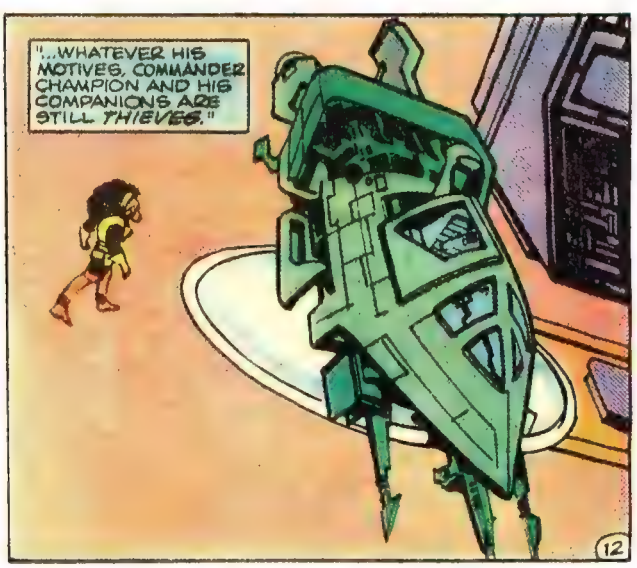
THE BOY, TEMPEST--CHAMPION'S SON. HE POSSESSES REMARKABLE PHASE POWERS, AND A NEARLY UNCONTROLLABLE TEMPER.
UNTIL RECENTLY, HE AND CHAMPION NEVER SPOKE. THEIR RELATIONSHIP WAS DESTROYED BY MARTIN'S MEMORY OF THE BOY'S MOTHER.
I'D SAY TEMPEST WOULD DO ANYTHING TO WIN HIS FATHER'S ATTENTION... AND LOVE.

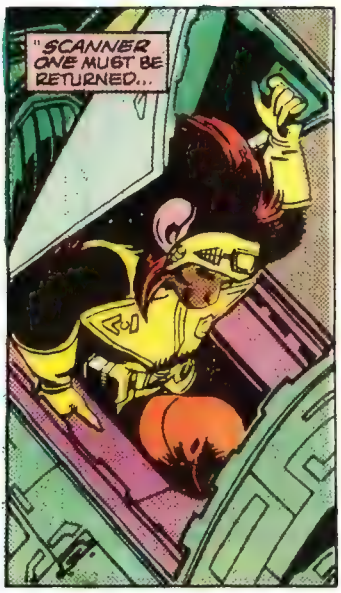

MORPHEA...A CANOPIAN WITH EMPATH POWERS, RAISED IN A CRECHE-FAMILY, WITH NO SENSE OF PARENTAL LOVE...
...SHE SEEMS TO HAVE "ADOPTED" THE EGGITE, "BABE."
BABE WAS BROUGHT TO ATARI STATION BY AN UNSCRUPULOUS FREIGHTER CAPTAIN AS AN UNOFFICIAL SLAVE.
MY JUDGMENT IS, MORPHEA JOINED CHAMPION OUT OF SOME MISGUIDED MATERNAL INSTINCT-- HOPING TO HELP THE CHILD ESCAPE BONDAGE.

ALL WELL AND GOOD. BUT WHY DID CHAMPION STEAL SCANNER ONE?
I BELIEVE HE WANTS TO TRACE HIS IMAGINARY "EVIL FORCE"--
WHAT DIFFERENCE WHY?

WHATEVER YOU SAY, HE'S A THIEF. I KNOW ABOUT THIEVES, DOCTOR. PAKRAT WAS BORN MY BROTHER. THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO HANDLE A THIEF.
TRACK HIM DOWN...AND BRING HIM TO JUSTICE.
GIVE ME A SHIP WITH MULTIVERSE DRIVE CAPABILITY... AND I'LL CATCH ALL OUR THIEVES.
YOU HAVE NO AUTHORITY HERE. IN FACT, WHEN YOU FIRED YOUR WEAPON AT ATARI MUSEUM, YOU BROKE OUR LAW--
I RECOGNIZE A HIGHER LAW. JUSTICE.

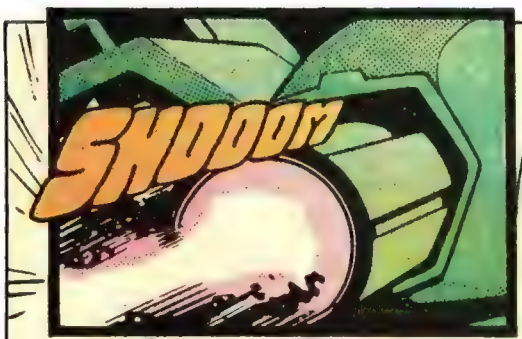
OFFICER RIDENT MAKES AN INTERESTING CASE, DOCTOR. HE MAY HAVE A MULTIVERSE SCOUT SHIP-- ON LOAN.
WHAT HE DOES WITH IT IS HIS AFFAIR.
YOUR FAITH IN YOUR OLD FRIEND IS TOUCHING. BUT AS THE OFFICER POINTED OUT...

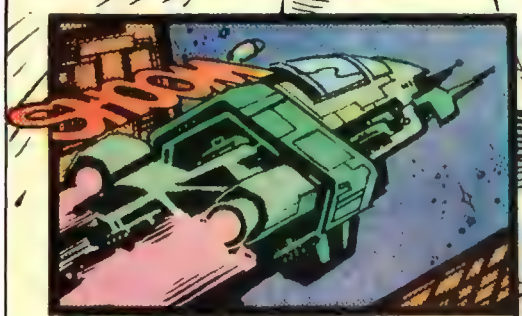

"...WHATEVER HIS MOTIVES, COMMANDER CHAMPION AND HIS COMPANIONS ARE STILL THIEVES."

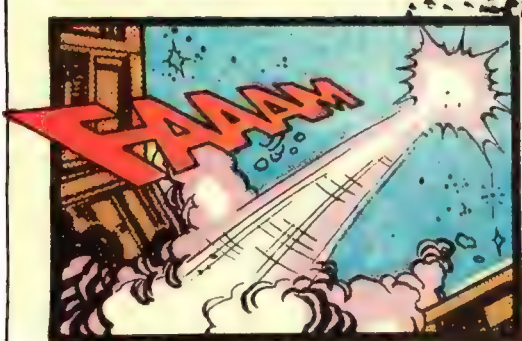

"SCANNER ONE MUST BE RETURNED...

"... AND CHAMPION'S CREW MUST FACE TRIAL."

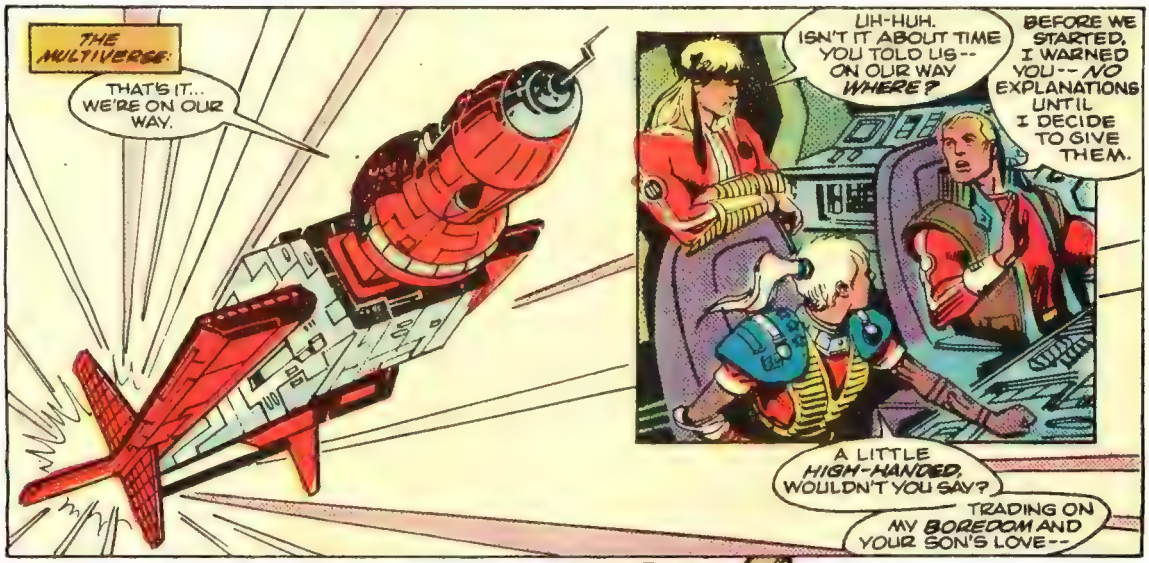
IT'S OVER, BROTHER. YOU'VE ESCAPED ME FOR THE LAST TIME. OUR FAMILY HONOR WILL BE RESTORED--


SHOOOM

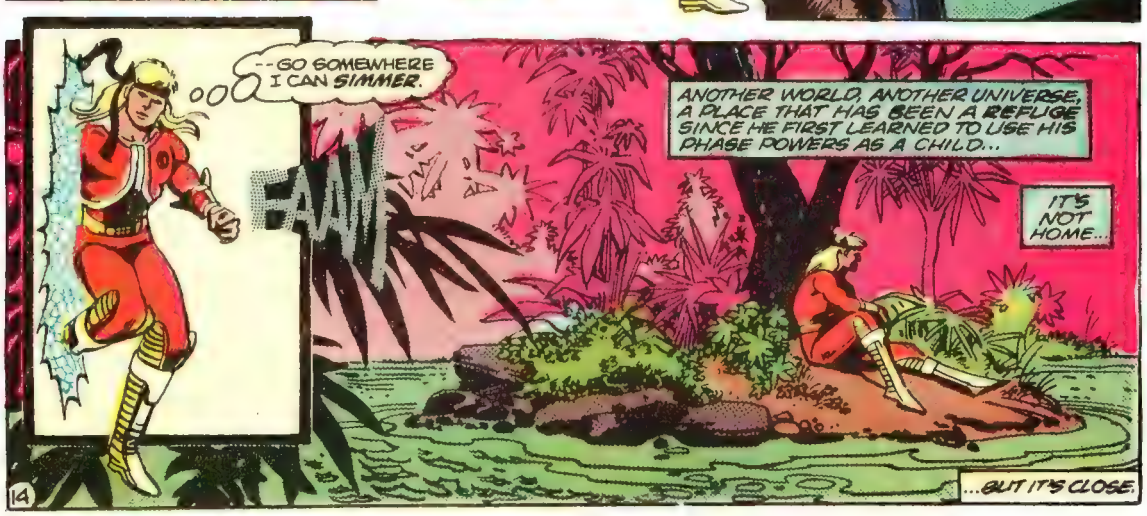

SHOOK


AAAAM

--AND CAN ONLY BE RESTORED BY YOUR DEATH!


THE MULTIVERSE:
THAT'S IT... WE'RE ON OUR WAY.
UH-HUH. ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU TOLD US-- ON OUR WAY WHERE?
BEFORE WE STARTED, I WARNED YOU-- NO EXPLANATIONS UNTIL I DECIDE TO GIVE THEM.
A LITTLE HIGH-HANDED, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
TRADING ON MY BOREDOM AND YOUR SON'S LOVE--

HE CAN'T HEAR YOU, DART.
AND I'M BEGINNING TO WISH I'D NEVER HEARD HIM.
I FEEL SO DUMB. LETTING HIM TALK ME INTO HELPING STEAL THIS SHIP...FOR SOME WILD-GOOSE CHASE OF A SECRET MISSION.
GOT TO GET OUT--


--GO SOMEWHERE I CAN SIMMER.
FAAM
ANOTHER WORLD, ANOTHER UNIVERSE, A PLACE THAT HAS BEEN A REFUGE SINCE HE FIRST LEARNED TO USE HIS PHASE POWERS AS A CHILD...
IT'S NOT HOME...
...BUT IT'S CLOSE.

HUMANS WHO WALK THROUGH WALLS? WHAT HAVE YOU GOTTEN INTO THIS TIME, PAKRAT?

AT LEAST I'VE MANAGED TO GIVE BROTHER RIDENT THE SLIP AGAIN-- THAT'S SOMETHING!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS JUMP THIS SCOW AT THE NEXT PORT OF--

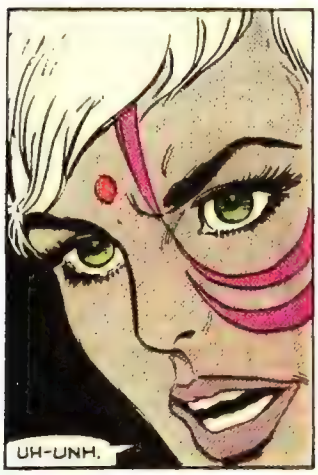
EEEEK!

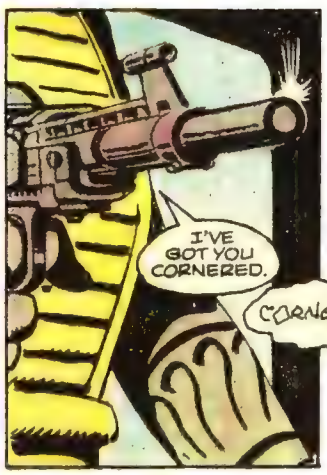
GOR-RY.
GNAK!
COMMANDER CHAMPION, THERE SEEMS TO BE A STOWAWAY ABOARD SCANNER ONE.
DART, HANDLE IT.
FORGET ABOUT REACHING THE NEXT PORT--
--I'VE GOT TO FIND A LIFEBOAT AND SHIP OFF THIS ZOO RIGHT NOW!
EVER SINCE I STOLE THE KLAVIAN CROWN JEWELS BACK ON MOON ALPHA, MY LIFE'S BEEN GOING DOWNHILL.

OH, NO...

...NOT FAIR!

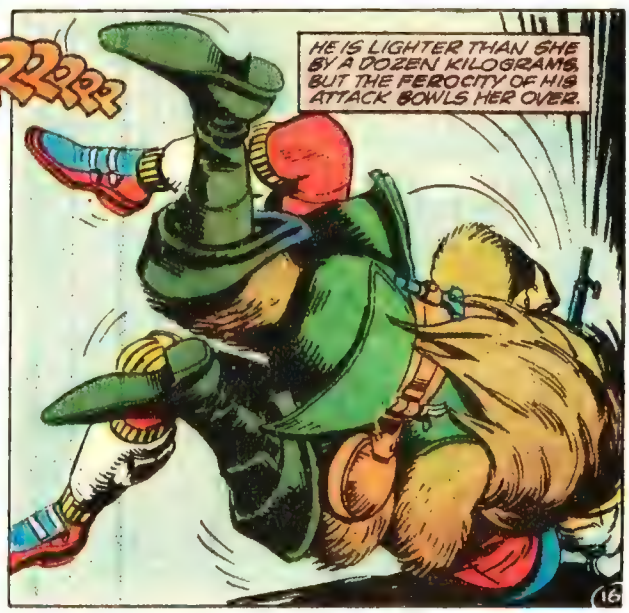
GOING SOMEWHERE?


UH-UNH.


I'VE GOT YOU CORNERED.

CORNERED...

GRAKKRRRRRR
DAMN!


HE IS LIGHTER THAN SHE BY A DOZEN KILOGRAMS, BUT THE FEROCITY OF HIS ATTACK BOWLS HER OVER.

FRANKLY--

--SHE'S IMPRESSED.

LATER...

YOUR STUN-PISTOL DID NO PERMANENT HARM, DART. HE WAKES... CONFUSED, BUT ALREADY PLANNING *ESCAPE*.

HIS NAME IS *TUKLA OLY*, BUT HE CALLS HIMSELF *PAKRAT*. IT WOULD SEEM HE IS, BY TRADE, A *THIEF*.

YOU READ MY MIND.

SHE READ MY MIND.

MORPHEA'S GOOD AT THAT. ANYTHING *ELSE* OF INTEREST, DOCTOR?

HE IS *TERRIFIED*.

IT APPEARS HE LIVES HIS ENTIRE *LIFE* IN A STATE AKIN TO PANIC...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

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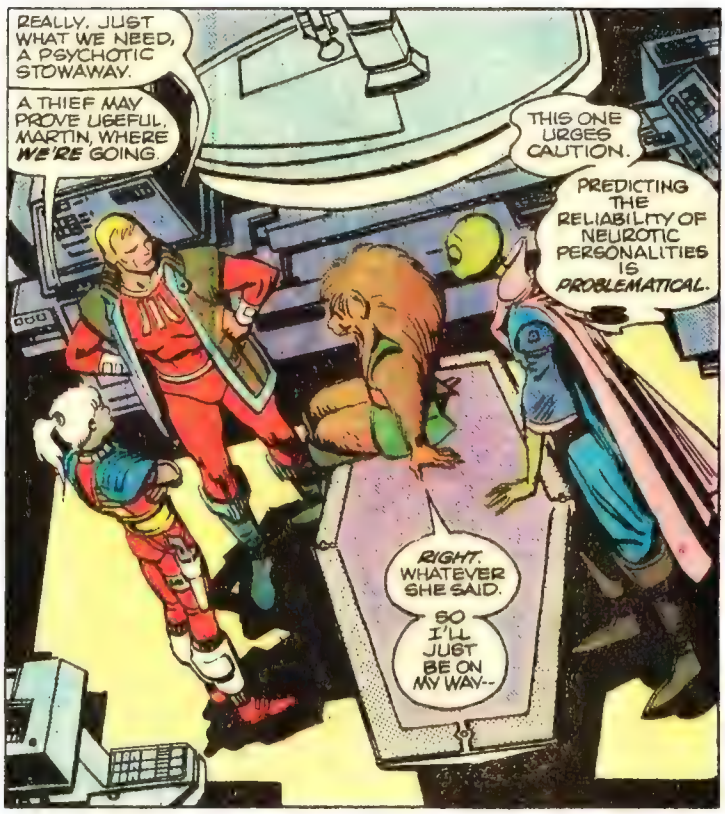
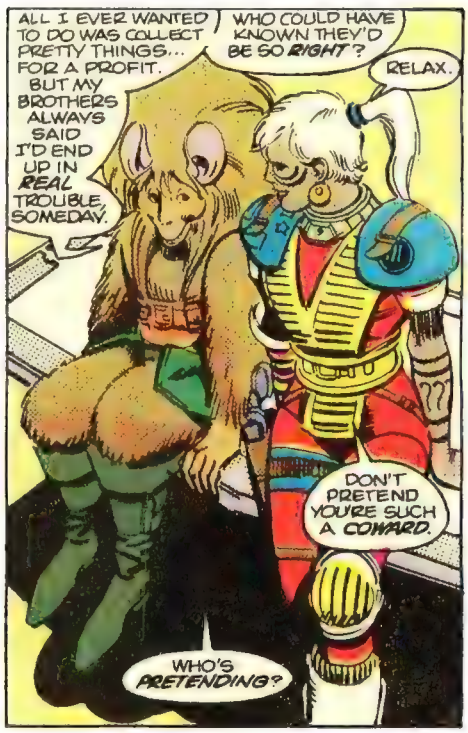
...EXCEPT FOR THOSE MOMENTS WHEN HE'S CUT OFF FROM FLIGHT.
A MOST INTRIGUING PSYCHOSIS.


REALLY, JUST WHAT WE NEED, A PSYCHOTIC STOWAWAY.
A THIEF MAY PROVE USEFUL, MARTIN, WHERE WE'RE GOING.
THIS ONE URGES CAUTION.
PREDICTING THE RELIABILITY OF NEUROTIC PERSONALITIES IS PROBLEMATICAL.
RIGHT. WHATEVER SHE SAID.
SO I'LL JUST BE ON MY WAY--

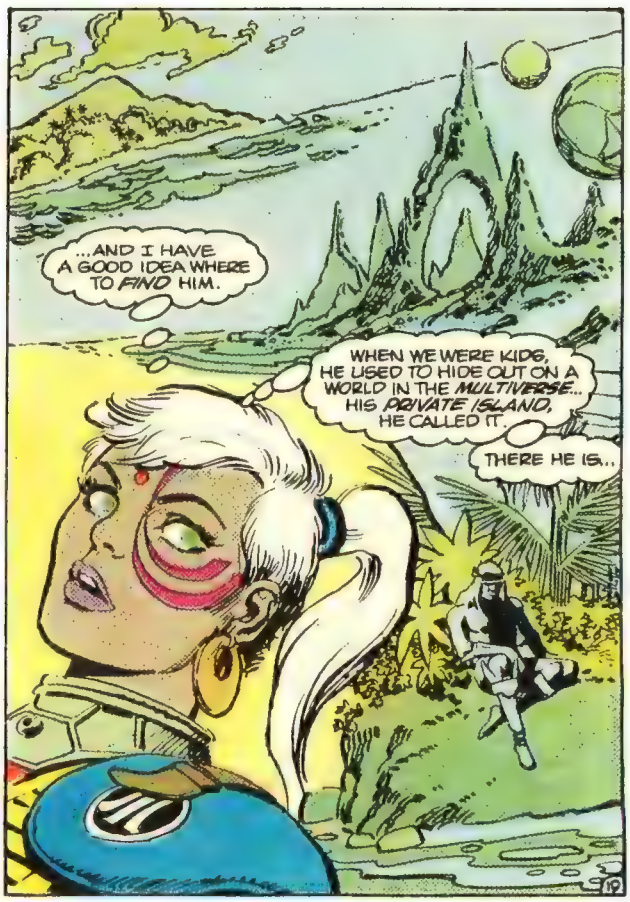
--WAY--
UH, DOES THIS ROOM HAVE ANOTHER EXIT?
JUST THE ONE. WHY?

OH. NOTHING. I SAW THAT OVERGROWN MOUNTAIN OF MEAT TOSS A MEGATON CARGOMOD AROUND LIKE A RATION PACK, BACK ON ATARI STATION, THAT'S ALL.*
SUPPOSE I JUST SLEEP HERE TILL WE REACH PORT.
AHH--WHICH PORT ARE WE HEADED FOR, ANYWAY?
* LAST ISSUE...--ANDY.

NO PORT, PAKRAT. EVER HEAR OF THE MULTIVERSE?
MULTI--YOU MEAN OTHER DIMENSIONS?
EEP.

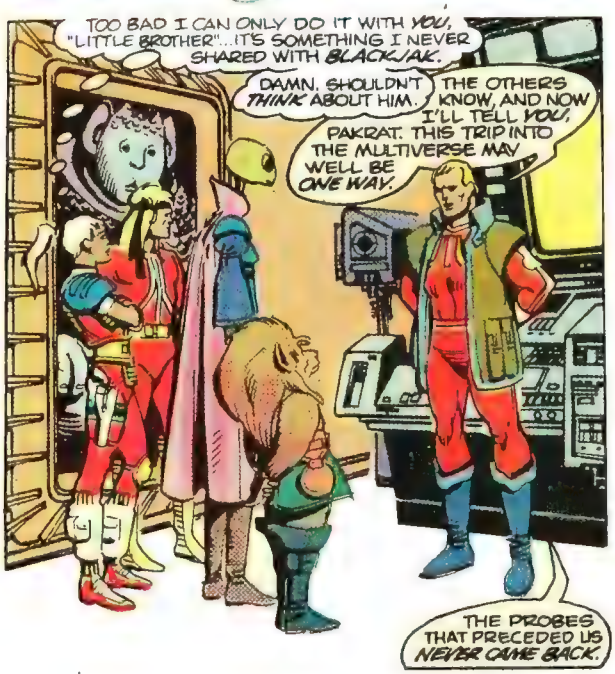

ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO WAS COLLECT PRETTY THINGS... FOR A PROFIT. BUT MY BROTHERS ALWAYS SAID I'D END UP IN REAL TROUBLE, SOMEDAY.
WHO COULD HAVE KNOWN THEY'D BE SO RIGHT?
RELAX.
DON'T PRETEND YOU'RE SUCH A COWARD.
WHO'S PRETENDING?

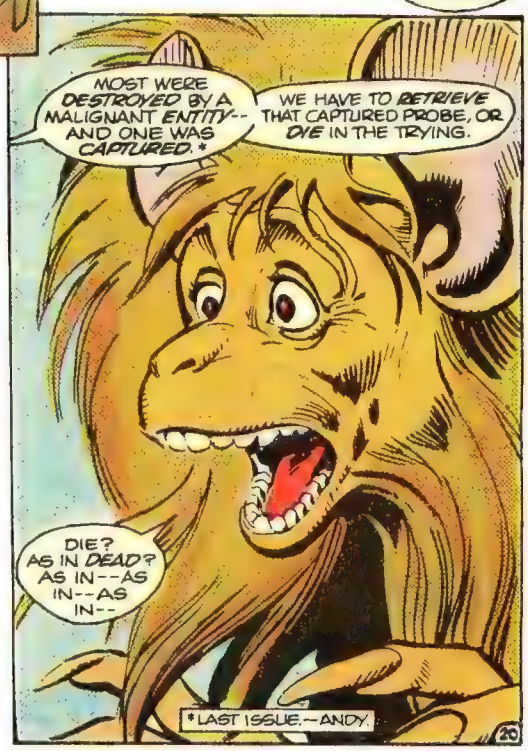
MIGHT AS WELL ACCEPT FACTS, MY FRIEND. LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU'RE PART OF OUR GROUP.
NOW THAT WE'RE ON COURSE, IT'S TIME I TOLD YOU ALL WHERE WE'RE GOING--AND WHY.
CHRIS SHOULD HEAR THIS...

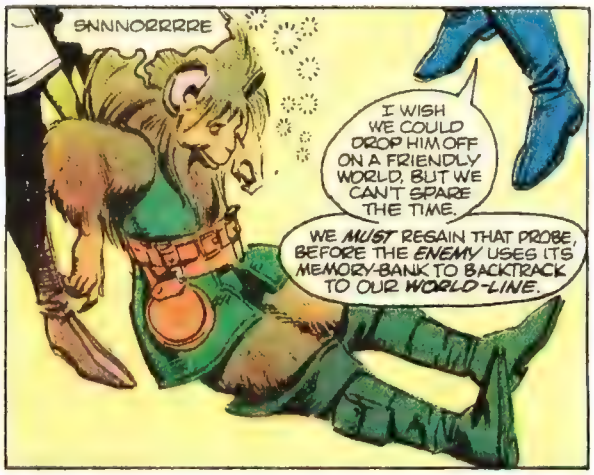

...AND I HAVE A GOOD IDEA WHERE TO FIND HIM.
WHEN WE WERE KIDS, HE USED TO HIDE OUT ON A WORLD IN THE MULTIVERSE... HIS PRIVATE ISLAND, HE CALLED IT.
THERE HE IS...

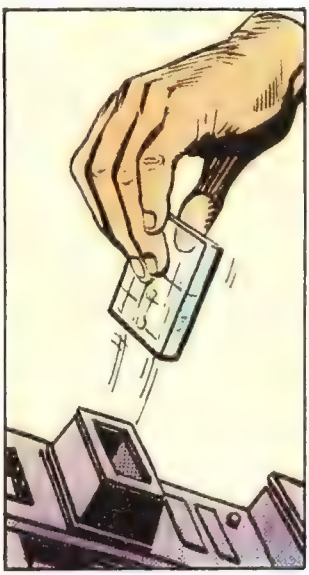
CHRIS... TIME TO COME BACK.
HUH?
DART? WHEW, YOU--

--STARTLED ME.
FEELING BETTER?
YEAH. DAD GOT UNDER MY SKIN, THAT'S ALL.
SO YOU CAN STILL REACH ME WITH A PSYCHIC IMAGE...
GUESS IT'S A TALENT YOU DON'T LOSE.


TOO BAD I CAN ONLY DO IT WITH YOU, "LITTLE BROTHER"...IT'S SOMETHING I NEVER SHARED WITH BLACKJAK.
DAMN. SHOULDN'T THINK ABOUT HIM.
THE OTHERS KNOW, AND NOW I'LL TELL YOU, PAKRAT. THIS TRIP INTO THE MULTIVERSE MAY WELL BE ONE WAY.
THE PROBES THAT PRECEDED US NEVER CAME BACK.


MOST WERE DESTROYED BY A MALIGNANT ENTITY-- AND ONE WAS CAPTURED.*
WE HAVE TO RETRIEVE THAT CAPTURED PROBE, OR DIE IN THE TRYING.
DIE? AS IN DEAD? AS IN--AS IN--AS IN--
*LAST ISSUE.--ANDY.





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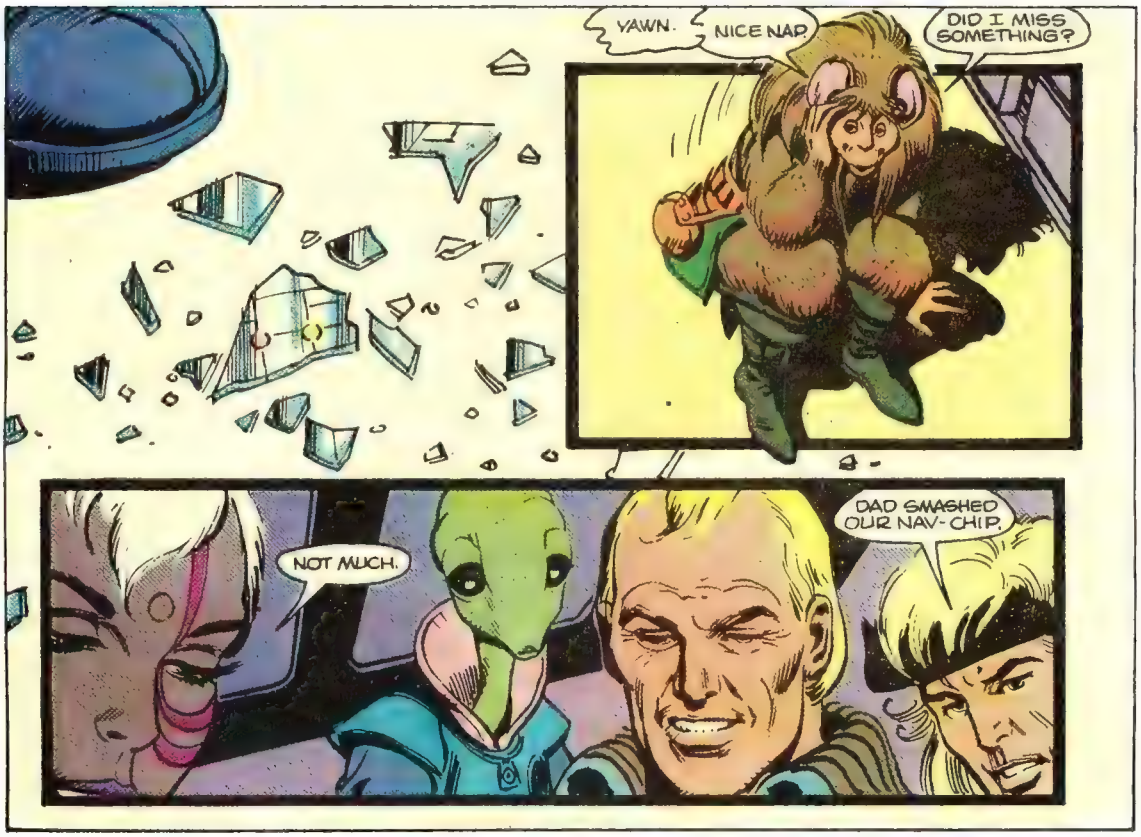
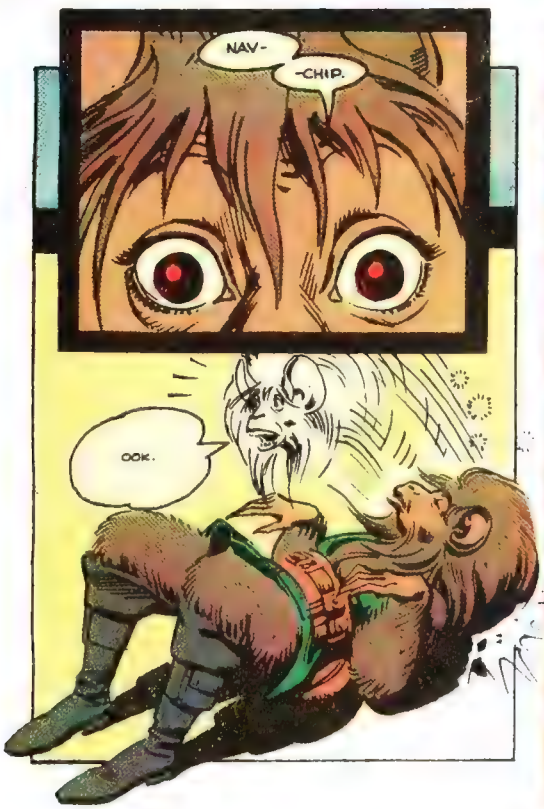
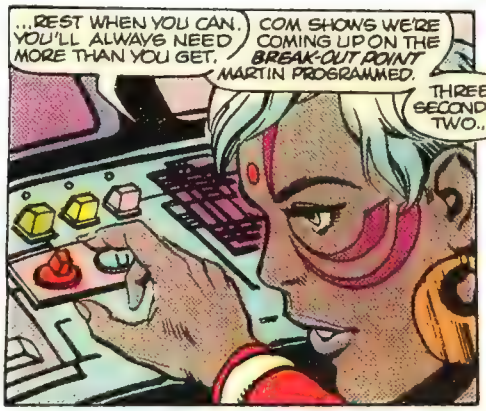
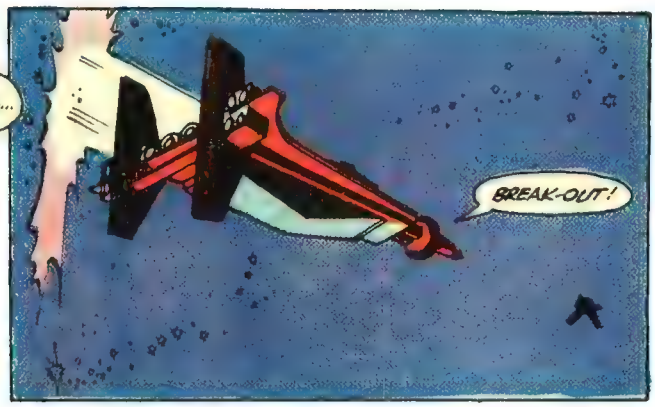

YAWN.
NICE NAP.
DID I MISS SOMETHING?
NOT MUCH.
DAD SMASHED OUR NAV-CHIP.

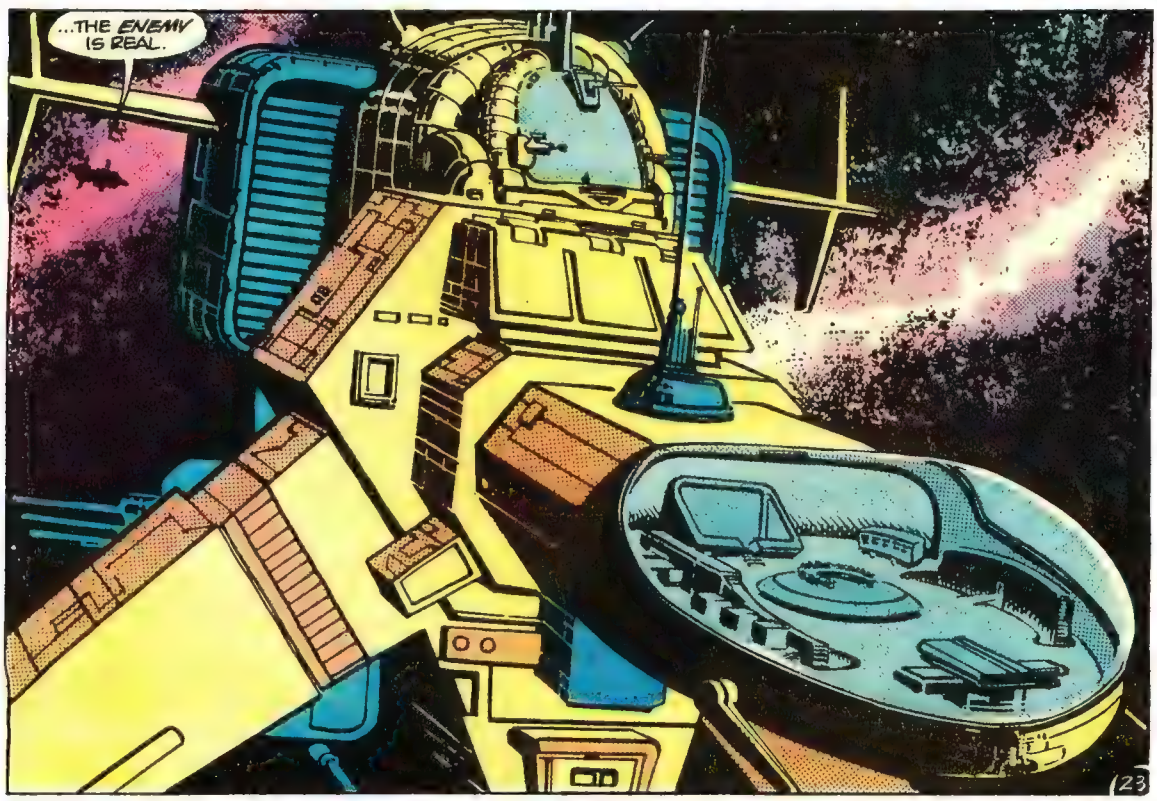

NAV-
-CHIP.
OOK.

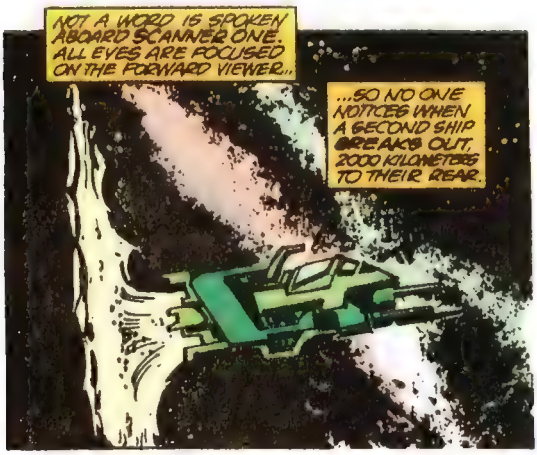
GETS A LOT OF SLEEP, DOESN'T HE?
PERSONALLY, I LIKE HIS STYLE.
ONE RULE YOU LEARN FAST, SOLDIERING...

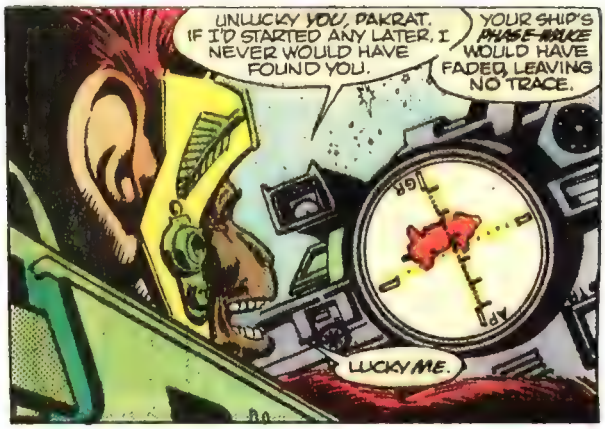

...REST WHEN YOU CAN. YOU'LL ALWAYS NEED MORE THAN YOU GET.
COM SHOWS WE'RE COMING UP ON THE BREAK-OUT POINT MARTIN PROGRAMMED.
THREE SECONDS... TWO...

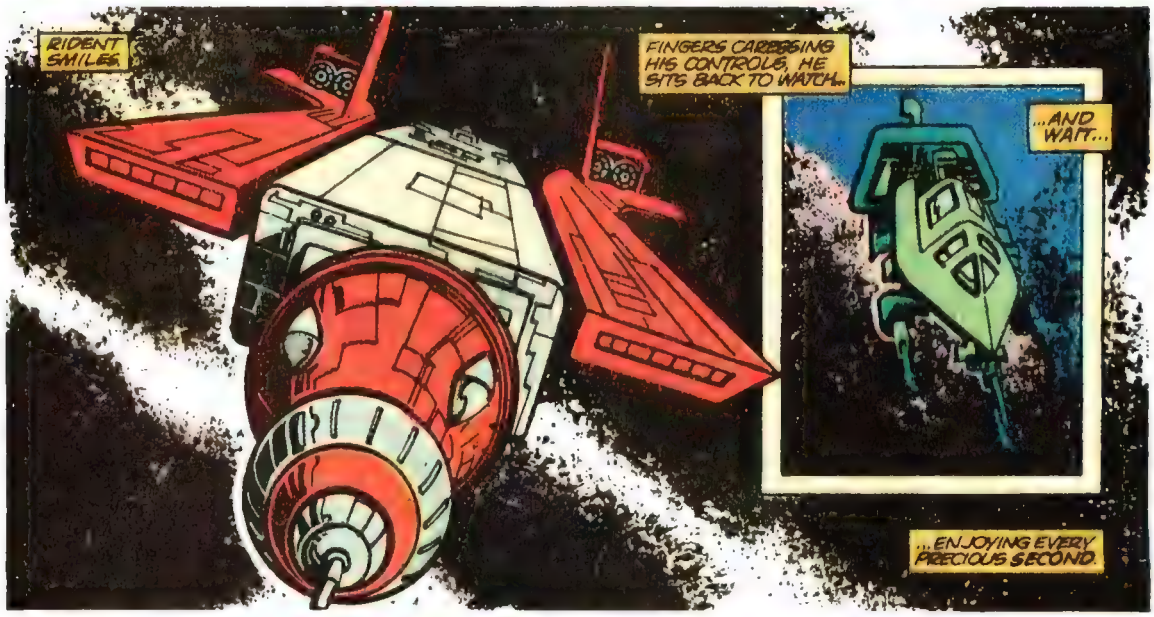

BREAK-OUT!

WELL, WE'RE BACK IN NORMAL SPACE-- BUT IN WHAT UNIVERSE, MARTIN?
DART, IN THE FORWARD VIEWER... IS THAT--?
A... SHIP?
DIDN'T BELIEVE ME, DID YOU? THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY, BUT NOW YOU KNOW...

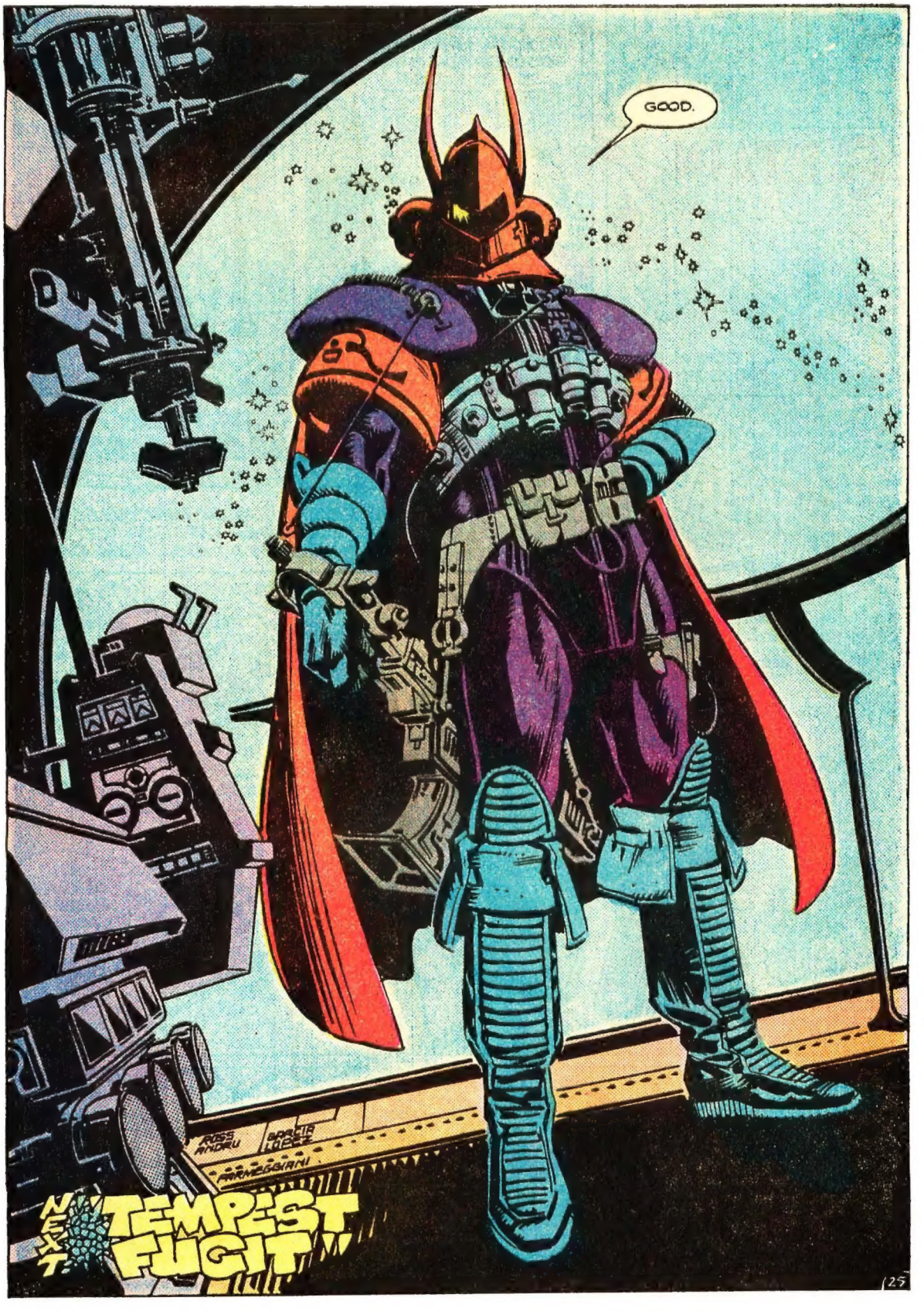

...THE ENEMY IS REAL.


NOT A WORD IS SPOKEN ABOARD SCANNER ONE. ALL EYES ARE FOCUSED ON THE FORWARD VIEWER...
...SO NO ONE NOTICES WHEN A SECOND SHIP BREAKS OUT, 2000 KILOMETERS TO THEIR REAR.


UNLUCKY YOU, PAKRAT. IF I'D STARTED ANY LATER, I NEVER WOULD HAVE FOUND YOU.
YOUR SHIP'S PHASE-BLUE WOULD HAVE FADED, LEAVING NO TRACE.
LUCKY ME.


RIDENT SMILES.
FINGERS CARESSING HIS CONTROLS, HE SITS BACK TO WATCH...
...AND WAIT...
...ENJOYING EVERY PRECIOUS SECOND.

MASTER, SENSORS REVEAL TWO VESSELS APPROACHING OUR FIELD PERIMETER.
COMPUTER ANALYSIS IDENTIFIES FIRST SHIP AS SCANNER ONE.
THEY HAVE COME, LORD, AS YOU PLANNED.


GOOD.
ROSS ANDRU
GARCIA LOPEZ
PARMEGGIANI
NEXT: TEMPEST FUGIT

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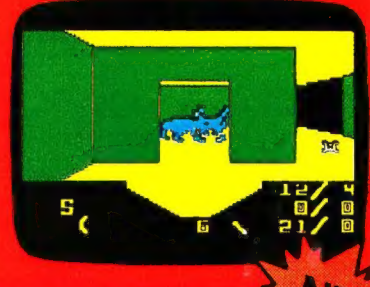

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